

Parties in Action

Trace how political parties began, changed, and influence civic life.

CE.8.a “describing the origins, history, and functions of political parties;”

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline details that tell how political parties began or changed over time. Circle each function parties perform, then write 1, 2, and 3 beside three different functions.

From Early Groups to Modern Parties

- ① In the 1790s, leaders in the new United States disagreed about how much power the national government should have. Supporters of Alexander Hamilton formed the Federalist Party, while supporters of Thomas Jefferson organized the Democratic-Republican Party. The Constitution did not create political parties. Instead, parties grew as people joined with others who held similar views. These early groups gave voters choices and helped leaders work together, but their conflicts also showed that citizens could disagree sharply about the nation’s future.
- ② Early parties did not stay the same. The Federalists faded after the early 1800s, and the Democratic-Republicans split into new groups. Andrew Jackson’s supporters helped build the Democratic Party during the 1820s and 1830s. The Republican Party formed in the 1850s as opponents of the spread of slavery joined together. Since the mid-1800s, Democrats and Republicans have been the two major parties in national politics, although smaller parties have also raised issues and nominated candidates.
- ③ Today, political parties perform several functions. They choose or support candidates, raise money, and organize campaigns. Parties also write platforms, which state the goals and policies they support. During elections, party workers register voters, share information, and encourage people to vote. After elections, party members in government often cooperate to pass laws that match their platform. Parties are private organizations, not branches of government, but they strongly shape who runs for office and how political ideas reach voters.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 Why did political parties grow in the United States during the 1790s?

2 How did the Democratic Party and the Republican Party develop during the 1800s?

3 Name two ways political parties help during an election campaign.

4 How can a party's platform affect both voters and government officials?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Invent a local political party. In exactly three sentences, tell why it began, describe one change in its history, and explain two functions it performs.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline details that tell how political parties began or changed over time. Circle each function parties perform, then write 1, 2, and 3 beside three different functions. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why did political parties grow in the United States during the 1790s?	Leaders and citizens disagreed about issues such as the power of the national government, so people joined others with similar views.
2	How did the Democratic Party and the Republican Party develop during the 1800s?	Jackson's supporters helped build the Democratic Party in the 1820s and 1830s. The Republican Party formed in the 1850s when opponents of the spread of slavery joined together.
3	Name two ways political parties help during an election campaign.	Answers may include supporting candidates, raising money, organizing campaigns, registering voters, sharing information, and encouraging people to vote.
4	How can a party's platform affect both voters and government officials?	A platform states a party's goals and policies, helping voters understand its ideas. Party members in government may cooperate to pass laws that match the platform.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The River Town Clean Streets Party began after residents disagreed about funding public trash pickup. After adding neighborhood safety to its platform, it recruited a city council candidate. The party explains its platform to voters and organizes volunteers for the candidate's campaign.

Accept any realistic political party description that includes an origin, one historical change, and two accurate party functions. Functions may include supporting candidates, organizing campaigns, sharing information, encouraging voting, writing a platform, or helping officials cooperate.